

LADI'SASHA JONES

CONSTRUCTED MYTHOS

AÏCHA SNOUSSI AND ALIDA RODRIGUES

Visual artists Aïcha Snoussi (Tunisia) and Alida Rodrigues (Angola) illustrate a body of imagery that is developed from distortions of the social world and vestiges of the imaginary. Both artists are working through a conceptual use of tonal darkness that is both sharp and playful.

Snoussi's black ink drawings depict a sequence of seemingly contradictory elements that are animated through the use of shadow, density, scale, and site, while Rodrigues' grayscale collages emerge from the space of portraiture and flora reproduction. Still, both of their works appear to be sites of multiplicity and responsive to interior impulse. Both blur the separation between artifice, repetition, and the mythical. This ambiguity that comes into being shifts our patterns of perception and suggests a more lingering approach to the act of looking.

Working both in murals and on paper, Aïcha Snoussi's drawings can be sculptural or comic in effect. Whimsical, enigmatic, and even sometimes erotic, her use of the notebook as both format and object exemplifies these qualities. Despite their yellowing pages and binding and the free swinging nature of the notebooks hung in installations, Snoussi's hand is precise and studied. Her images reflect a range of fictional characters, industrial geometry, and irregular depictions of organic matter. Although recent works introduce Snoussi's use of color - from deep reds to shades of pastel - the majority of her portfolio relays a deep engagement with black and monochromatic tones.

Overall, Snoussi's work remarks on the abstraction of reality: observed, imagined, and desired. Her drawings may require punctures through several pages, sprawl across an open fold, or be positioned in a corner, offering glimpses into scenes

that appear in motion. Undulating. Some images may be taking flight or dissipating into the puff of a smoky cloud. Others are creature-like or diagrammatic in form. All possess a sense of fluidity and somatic connection.

Taking this relationship with the body more literally, Alida Rodrigues' collage series *The Secret History of Plants* stirs together the stoicism of Victorian portraiture and the manipulation of found photographs, postcards, and cabinet cards, a style of photograph that was widely used for photographic portraiture after 1870.

The artist disrupts these images by applying flower cutouts and drawings over the heads of the figures. This aesthetic decision doesn't come across as a florid affect, but rather as an invitation to viewers to reflect on the absence or narrowed circulation of Black portraiture during this time period, as well as our haptic, intimate, or economic relationships with the environment. Layered over the familiar imagery of these strikingly still nineteenth-century poses, emerging from soft sepia prints, is a swollen bulb awaiting bloom, the fanning of leafy foliage, the curl of a petal, or the dramatic stretch and bend of a prickly stem - a gesture that pulls the figures into obscurity.

Similarly to Snoussi, more recent works by Rodrigues introduce colors into the floral overlays, which further disrupts the solidness or the permanence of the original narrative towards one layered with conjecture. As Snoussi remarks on the abstraction of reality, Rodrigues disrupts our pre-existing reality, both leading the viewer into their carefully constructed mythos.

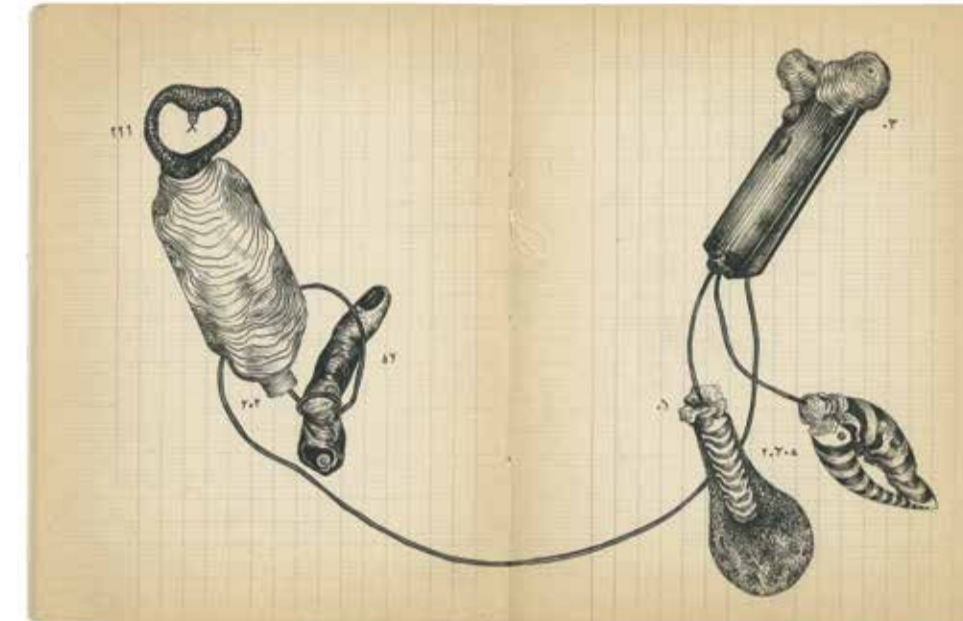
→ aichasnoussi.tumblr.com

→ tinawc.com > Alida Rodrigues

"A body of imagery that is developed from distortions of the social world and vestiges of the imaginary."

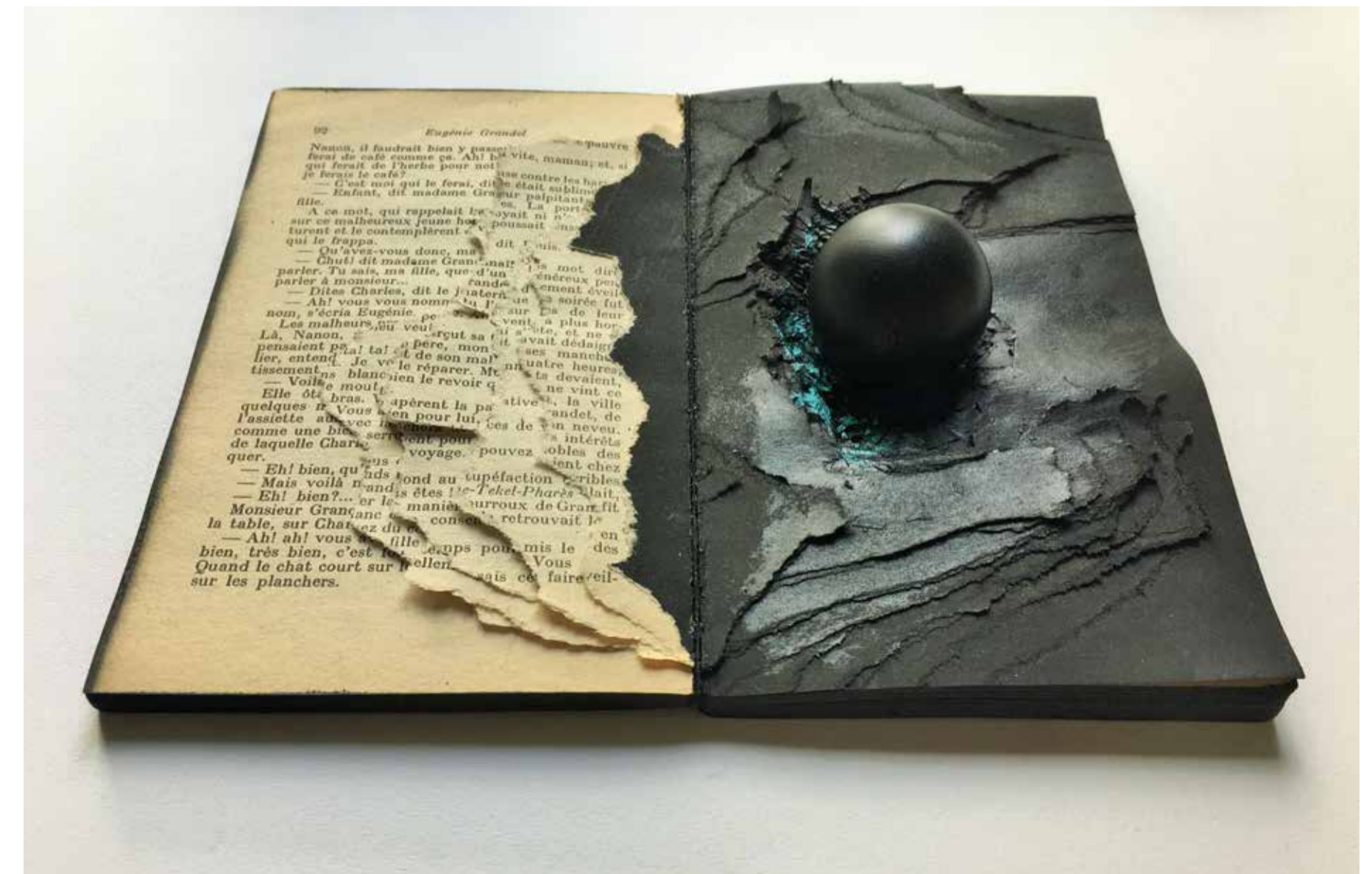


→ ALIDA RODRIGUES | TULIPE SERIE: THE SECRET HISTORY OF PLANTS, 2019. MIXED MEDIA COLLAGE | 12 X 6 CM. COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND THIS IS NOT A WHITE CUBE GALLERY.



→ AÏCHA SNOUSSI | ANTICODEXXX, 2017. INK ON SCHOOL NOTEBOOK | 17 X 22 CM. COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND A. GORGI GALLERY.

"Her images reflect a range of fictional characters, industrial geometry, and irregular depictions of organic matter."



→ AÏCHA SNOUSSI | FOSSILES, 2018. INSTALLATION DETAIL. MIXED MEDIA, FOUND BOOK | DIMENSIONS VARIABLE. COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND A. GORGI GALLERY.